

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-07 IO-13 L-03
NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 DODE-00 /082 W
-----092512 131302Z /53

O R 131214Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9262
INFO USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
USDEL MBFR VIENNA IMMEDIATE
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR

S E C R E T LONDON 16993

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR
SUBJECT: MBFR: NEW INITIATIVE

1. IN VIEW OF REVISED FRG POSITION ON TANK ARMY, WE
CALLED OCTOBER 13 ON ROLAND SMITH AT FCO TO SEEK UK
VIEWS ON WHERE WE GO FROM HERE.

2. SMITH BEGAN BY SAYING HMG PERFORMANCE AT RECENT
TRILATERAL MEETING WAS "ABYSMAL." BOTH MOD
AND UKDEL VIENNA HAD STRONG DOUBTS ABOUT MOVING FROM
WITHDRAWAL OF TANK ARMY TO WITHDRAWAL OF FIVE DIVISIONS.
UK SILENCE ON THIS POINT WAS THEREFORE MISLEADING.

3. ACCORDING TO SMITH, ALL BRITISH OFFICIALS NOW SHARE
VIEW THAT IT IS CRITICAL TO MAINTAIN MATCH BETWEEN
REDUCTIONS AND CEILINGS. THE PROBLEM WITH THE EXISTING
NATO POSITION ON THE TANK ARMY IS THAT WE DON'T HAVE
THAT MATCH. THE SAME APPLIES TO THE FIVE DIVISION
PROPOSAL BECAUSE WE ARE NOT ASKING FOR A CEILING ON

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DIVISIONS.

4. THEREFORE, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SENTIMENT IN HMG
TO GO DIRECTLY TO PROPOSAL FOR REDUCTIONS AND LIMITATIONS
ON ONLY TANKS AND MEN. AND IF THE ALLIANCE WERE TO TAKE
THAT STEP, MOD BELIEVES WEST SHOULD ASK FOR WITHDRAWAL
OF MORE TANKS AND MORE MEN. BRITISH RECOGNIZE THIS

WOULD REQUIRE STUDY IN NATO TO DECIDE HOW MANY MORE TANKS AND HOW MANY MORE MEN. THUS, MOD FAVORS RETENTION OF TANK ARMY DEMAND IN NEW INITIATIVE AND CONSIDERATION IN NATO OF FALLBACK TO ONLY TANKS AND MEN.

5. FCO'S POSITION IS ALSO THAT IF THERE IS GOING TO BE A CEILING ON ONLY TANKS AND MEN, FIVE DIVISION CONCEPT "GETS IN THE WAY." NONETHELESS, SMITH OPINED THAT IF FRG HAD STUCK TO BARGAIN, HMG WOULD HAVE EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS IN NATO DISCUSSION AND THEN GONE ALONG WITH CHANGE TO FIVE DIVISIONS. NOW, HOWEVER, IF GERMANS RETAIN REVISED POSITION ON TANK ARMY, SMITH SAID PERHAPS ALL THE THREE COULD AGREE TO WOULD BE ISSUE OF WITHDRAWAL AND LIMITATION OF SOVIET EQUIPMENT.

6. COMMENT: IT SEEMS THAT, AS ALWAYS, THE GERMANS ARE THE KEY. ALTHOUGH UK HAS CONCEPTUAL DOUBTS ABOUT MOVEMENT TO FIVE DIVISIONS, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD GO ALONG IF FRG DOES. IN ANY EVENT, WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT ANY FURTHER MESSAGE TO HMG ON THIS SUBJECT DIRECTLY AND SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS WHY INITIATIVE WOULD BE BADLY UNDERCUT IF DEPRIVED OF TANK ARMY MODIFICATION AS WELL AS UK CONCERN ABOUT MATCHING REDUCTIONS AND CEILINGS.

BREWSTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTIONS, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 13-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LONDON16993
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770373-0596
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771065/aaaacdhh.tel
Line Count: 86
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a34af830-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ACDA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 936220
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MBFR: NEW INITIATIVE
TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a34af830-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009